
Who Is Allaah? Where is He?

By Mahmood Muraad

Who is Allah?

Allah is the proper name applied to the true God who exists necessarily by Himself comprising all the excellent Divine names and attributes of perfection. Allah is One and Unique. He has no son, no partner, nor equal. He is the sole Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Every creature bears witness to His Oneness, Divinity, and Ruboobiyyah¹, and to the uniqueness of His attributes and names.

His essence does not resemble the essences. He does not inhere in anything, nor does anything inhere in Him.

“There is none like unto Him.”²

He is the One, the Sole, the Indivisible. He is the Rubb³ who accomplishes all affairs, Allah is the Omnipotent and the Omniscient.

His knowledge comprehends in perfect manner all things, hidden or manifest. He is greater than can be encompassed by the knowledge of His creatures. He knows everything, and He is aware of all that takes place in the earth and the heavens. Allah, the Supreme, is the Rubb of everything and has a free hand in disposal of all affairs.

His mercy encompasses everything. He is far removed from injustice or tyranny. He is wise in all His actions, just in all His decrees. His justice ensures order in the universe in which nothing is out of order.

There is no one to share His dominion, nor does He take an aide or supporter from His creatures. He is nearer to man than man's own jugular vein⁴. Whenever a believer is in need or distress calls on Him, He responds.

Allah has revealed His final Scripture, the Qur'an, to that last of His Messengers, Muhammed (saw) who was responsible for conveying the Message of Islam to mankind. He is the Exalted Allah. Glory is due to Him.

¹ Ruboobiyyah, inf. of Rubb

² Surah As Shura: 11

³ Some translate the term 'Rubb' into 'Lord', the meaning of 'Rubb' is far more comprehensive than to be restricted to a single word such as 'Lord'. Rubb, means, among other things, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Provider, and the One in whose hands is the disposal of all affairs.

⁴ Q 50:16

Where is Allah?

Allah, the Exalted, has described Himself in His Book, and by the tongue of His Messenger (saw) as Sublime, Supreme, and Lofty. The Qur'an is full of proofs relevant to the Loftiness of Allah.

Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah believe in and confirm all of the attributes of Allah without distorting their meaning, and that Allah is above His seven heavens, above His 'Arsh, and separated from His creatures, and His creatures are separated from Him.

This discourse will provide the Scriptural proofs of the Loftiness of Allah is an indivisible part of the inherent faculty of knowing Allah with which Allah has created mankind. Although the aqeedah of Loftiness of Allah is part of man's innate knowledge and cannot be subjected to hypothetical or philosophical argumentation, there are some deviated sects who follow their whims and deny this intuitive and self-evident fact. For this reason, they have twisted Scriptural proofs and distorted them, and manipulated the texts to conform with their deviant argument.

All of the divine attributes are intrinsically related to the attribute of divine Loftiness. Therefore, accepting or rejecting them must be based on accepting or rejecting the Loftiness of Allah. Whoever believes that Allah is above His 'Arsh⁵ and separated from His creatures, also believes in the rest of the attributes of Allah, and believes as well that the heavens and the earth submit to His will, and that He is the Great Rubb of the worlds. Allah does whatever He wills and rules according to His Own wishes. Glory be to Him.

Denial of the divine Loftiness is one of the basic doctrinal heresy promoted by the Jahmites⁶ and their off-shoots of today in order to confuse the Muslims' minds. Denying this divine attribute also leads by necessity to the denial of the attribute of the istiwa of Allah above His Arsh. There is no doubt that the denial of the attributes of Allah clashes with the clear Qur'anic verses in which the unique essential attributes and beautiful names of Allah confirmed. These attributes must be affirmed as identical with Allah.

The essential divine attributes of Allah constitute an integral part of His essence and are not superadded to it. They are accepted literally by Ahlu-Sunnah wal-Jama'h without questioning the 'how' of these attributes. To deny them is clear unbelief and heresy.

It is for this reason this discourse has been prepared to deal with the creed of Loftiness of Allah, or the question, 'Where is Allah?' with the Scriptural evidences from the Qur'an and the authentic prophetic traditions, as well as the traditions of those early Muslims, the pious predecessors.

⁵ Arsh, the Throne of Allah.

⁶ Jahmites are the followers of Jahm bin Safan (d. 128-745), a radical heretic. Among other things, they deny that Allah, the Exalted, is above His Arsh, and they allege that He is everywhere

The Qur'anic Proofs

Allah, the Exalted, commands the believers to refer their disputes and differences to His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (saw) saying:

“And when you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day.”⁷

Therefore, the words of Allah, the Exalted, as well as the words of His Messenger (saw) must be held as the ultimate and decisive judgment. No judgment or decision should take precedence over theirs whether in issues related to the divine attributes, or any other religious issue.

By their emphasis on reason in establishing religious truth, the rationalists, the modernists, and the Jahmites assert the pre-eminence of reason over the divine revelations. Whereas the Loftiness of Allah which is clearly enunciated in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, is beyond the reach of reason.

The true believers, contrary to the rationalists, believe that the 'Arsh of Allah is above the seven heavens. They also believe that having created the seven heavens and the earth and what is in them, Allah, the Exalted, has mounted His great 'Arsh. Allah says:

“Declare your Rubb, the Supreme, to be far removed from every imperfection or impurity.”⁸

The "Supreme", linguistically, is in the superlative signifying that Allah is higher than everything and is above all things in essence, power, and invincibility. Commenting on this verse, Ibn-ul-Qayyim, may Allah grant him His mercy, said:

All Muslims in the past and in the present, when supplicating Allah or imploring His help, they always raise their hands with palms towards the heaven. They do not lower their hands with palms towards the earth, nor do they turn them right or left, nor towards any other direction. They raise their hands up, knowing that Allah is above them. The Muslims also say in prayer while prostrating,

“I declare my Rubb, the Supreme, to be far removed from every imperfection or impurity.”⁹

If Allah is everywhere, as the deviated sects allege, why then the above verse does not read, 'Declare your Rubb, (around you), (below you), or (everywhere)?' Allah says:

“They fear their Rubb above them.”¹⁰

This verse refers to the angels who are above us, and above them is our Rubb, the Blessed, the Exalted. Lest anyone be confused, Allah confirms in this verse that He is above the angels who are the residents of the heavens:

⁷ Q 4:59

⁸ Q 87:1

⁹ Q 87:1

¹⁰ Q 16:50

“The Compassionate has mounted the 'Arsh.”¹¹

And:

“And verily, your Rubb is Allah who created the heaven and earth in six days, and then mounted the 'Arsh.”¹²

Allah also says:

“Are you sure that He Who is Above the heaven will not cleave the earth beneath you? Or are you sure that He Who is above the heaven will not send against you a stone-charged hurricane.”¹³

The renowned exegetes and commentators are agreed that the One Who is above the heaven is none but Allah Who has mounted His Arsh and is above it in the manner which suits His Majesty.

Those who believe that Allah is everywhere base their argument on verses such as:

“And He is Ilaah in the Heavens and He is Ilaah on the Earth!”

The term, 'Ilaah' is classical Arabic means, 'the worshipped'; thus the meaning of the above verse is, "It is He Who is worshipped in the heaven and worshipped on the earth". It would have been redundant were the verse to speak about the existence of Allah in the heaven and on the earth, for the term Illah' is an adjective of Allah, while the pronouns, 'He' in the verse is used in lieu of the name 'Allah', therefore, when the name 'Allah' replaces the pronoun 'He', we get the proper meaning of the verse: 'And it is Allah Who is worshipped in the heaven and on the earth'. But according to the deviated sect who consider the term, 'Ilaah' as 'Allah', we get the redundant meaning, 'And Allah is Allah in the heaven and Allah is on the earth,' a sentence which is grammatically, linguistically and logically incorrect.

Qatadah, a renowned exegete, interpreted this verse as: 'He is worshipped in the heaven and on the earth'.

Imam al-Aajurri said: 'al-Ilaah, is the worshipped. He is worshipped in the heaven as He is worshipped on the earth'.

The Omnipresence of the Divine Knowledge

“And He is Allah above the heaven and on the earth He knows your private and public affairs. And He knows what you achieve.”¹⁴

Those who deny that Allah is above His 'Arsh, dubiously argue that this verse supports their argument. Their argument is refuted by realizing that this verse refers to the knowledge of Allah, according to the renowned exegetes, not His essence. They further assert that this verse

¹¹ Q 20:2

¹² Q 7:54

¹³ Q 67:17.18

¹⁴ Q 6:3

signifies that the knowledge of Allah encompasses all things in the heavens and on the earth. The reference to the divine knowledge is made clearly by repeating the clause, 'He knows' twice in this verse, that is to say: **"Allah, the Exalted, knows the hidden and the open, and He knows what you achieve"**.

Had the verse ended with the word, 'earth', one might take their dubious argument into consideration, but Allah, the Exalted, makes it abundantly clear that it is His knowledge, not His essence that encompasses all things.

Another dubious argument is presented by those who deny the fact that Allah, the Exalted, is above His 'Arsh, by alleging that the following verse supports their argument.

"Do you not see that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth? There is no secret counsel of three, but He is their fourth, nor of five, but He is their sixth, nor of fewer than that, nor of more, but He is with them wherever they may be. Then on the Day of Resurrection He will inform them of what they did. Surely, Allah knows all things full well."¹⁵

The above verse, they contend, signifies that Allah is essentially everywhere. This argument is refuted by the prominent exegete, Ibn Kathir who says: "This means that Allah is well acquainted with their utterances, and private talks and thoughts."

Al-Qurtubi commented on this verse saying: "He knows and hears their private counsel. This is evidenced by the fact that the opening and concluding clauses of this verse confirm the knowledge of Allah."

Al-Qasimi says: "The scholars among the Prophet's companions, who transmitted the meaning of the Qur'an to their successors, held this verse to mean that Allah is above His 'Arsh, but His knowledge is everywhere."

The linguistic analysis of this verse proves the following points:

- The opening words of the above verse speak of Allah's knowledge, not His location.
- Private counsel, or secret talk, is the theme of this verse. Allah says, 'There is no secret counsel of three, but He is their fourth'. He does not say, 'There are not three, but He is their fourth'. Thus the meaning becomes quite clear that it is the knowledge of Allah what encompasses all His creatures.
- Allah confirms that He will inform them of their secret talk on the Day of Resurrection.
- The verse ends, therefore, confirming Allah's knowledge.
- Allah begins the Surah of al-Mujadilah (Chapter 58), of which the verse in question is part, with the following verse:

¹⁵ Q 58:7

“Allah has indeed heard the speech of the woman who pleads with you concerning her husband and complains to Allah. And Allah has heard your dialogue. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.”¹⁶

Allah, the Exalted, states that He has heard the woman who was complaining to the Prophet (saw), and has certainly heard her arguing with her husband, but He did not state in the verse that He was their third.

- In the subsequent verse, Allah emphasizes that He is well acquainted with the deeds of His slaves.

If one were to believe that Allah is essentially everywhere, it would follow then that He also dwells in filthy places. Only an insane person would dare to impute to Allah such an attribute. Far removed is Allah of what they ascribe to Him.

It would also follow that Allah is mingling with His creatures in the heavens and on the earth. Such belief has paved the way for pantheism ¹⁷, and promoted the myth of god incarnate. Allah is far removed from what they ascribe to Him. It should be clear in the minds of the true believers that there is nothing to surround Allah, the Exalted, nor is there a place to contain Him. Things and places are creatures, and Allah is above all His creatures. All creatures need Him, while He is separated from His creatures, and stands in need of none of them.

The Heaven is the Qiblah of the Du'a

Muslims supplicate Allah with their palms upheld because they believe Allah is above the heaven. When confronted with this fact, those who deny the Loftiness of Allah allege that Muslims supplicate in this manner only because heaven is the qiblah of du'aa or supplication.

- The above allegation, to begin with, has no proof in the Qur'an or the Sunnah, and it cannot be related to any of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) nor to any of the Tabi'een, who succeeded them. There is no mention of this statement in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of the Messenger (saw). The issue of the qiblah is central to the religion of Islam, so every Muslim must be aware of it and especially the scholars of the Muslim ummah should have known it.

- It is an established fact, that the Ka'bah is the qiblah of formal prayer as well as the du'aa or supplication. To declare the heaven or anywhere else to be the qiblah of du'aa is a gross bid'ah (innovation) and a clear breach of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the consensus of the ummah, because the Muslims have one single qiblah, the Ka'bah.

- The qiblah is the direction to which Muslims turn or face in prayer, and to face something is to look toward it. If the heavens were the qiblah, the Messenger (saw) would have commanded his companions, with whom Allah is pleased, to face the heavens in their prayer. On the contrary, the Muslims are forbidden to uphold their eyes while praying, but are to

¹⁶ Q 58:1

¹⁷ Pantheism is the belief that Allah and the universe constitute one being, as opposed to the fundamental belief of the Oneness of Allah and the separateness of His creations, as stressed by Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.

concentrate on the spot upon which their faces rest during prostration. The Messenger of Allah (saw) warned:

“Let those who uphold their eyes while praying stop doing so, lest they become blind.”¹⁸

The Qur'anic verses allow no room for such opinions. Allah, the Exalted, specifically commanded His Messenger (saw) and his ummah to face the direction of the Ka'bah in their prayers, saying:

“And from wherever you come forth, turn your face toward the Sacred Mosque.”¹⁹

Then Allah addresses the Muslims:

“And wherever you may be, turn your faces toward it.”²⁰[19]

The Loftiness of Allah is also proven by the following verse:

“To Him ascend the good words, and He exalts the righteous deeds.”²¹

This verse contains the clear words of Allah, in which the verb "ascend" is used to indicate that Allah is above and separated from His creatures. The ascendance of deeds is also proven by the words of the Prophet (saw) describing the excellence of the period of time that falls after zawal of zenith. He (saw) said,

“This is a time when the gates of the heavens are opened, and I hope that a good deed of mine would ascend to Allah.”

The verb "ascend" in the text signifies that the good deeds are raised up to reach Allah, the Exalted. And Allah says:

“The angels and ar-Rooh²² ascend to Allah in a day which is fifth thousand years long.”²³

The Loftiness of the Creator is made clear by the great distance that separates the angels who inhabit the heavens from their Rubb above them. And Allah says:

“He manages all affairs from the heaven unto the earth.”²⁴

It should be borne in mind that this verse is preceded by the words of Allah: **“He mounted the Throne.”**

And Allah also says:

“O, Issa (Jesus)! I shall cause you to die, and raise you up to Me.”²⁵

¹⁸ Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim and others.

¹⁹ Q 2:150

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Q 35:10

²² Ar-Rooh is Jibreel, peace be upon him.

²³ Q 70:4

²⁴ Q 32:5

²⁵ Q 3:55

Since Allah addressed Issa saying: **“I will raise you up to Me”**, what would those who believe that Allah is everywhere answer when they are asked: **“Where is Issa now?”** They would say either Issa is everywhere, or he is in heaven. If they claim that Issa is everywhere, they would apostatize as a result of their equating Issa with Allah in accordance with their claim that Allah is everywhere. A claim which resembles the Christians' myth of god incarnate. But if they say, “Issa is in the heaven,” they would admit that Allah did raise Issa up to the heaven, and that Allah is above the heavens. Allah says:

“Surely, your Rubb is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days; then He istawa²⁶ on the Throne.”²⁷

This is one of the seven Qur'anic verses in which Allah, the Exalted, refers to His istiwa' on His 'Arsh. Ahlus-Sunnah are certain that the great 'Arsh of Allah is above the seven heavens. They also believe that Allah, having created the earth and apportioned its provisions, ascended above His great 'Arsh. Only those who believe otherwise hold these verses to be allegorical. Allah, they say, “is everywhere”, denying that He is above the 'Arsh. Exalted is Allah, and far is He removed from their ascription.

Quoting all or even most of the verses signifying Allah's attribute of Loftiness would only enlarge the volume of this issue. There are about 215 verses in the Qur'an containing the verb sent down with reference to either the Qur'an, the previous Scriptures, or the angels.

Proofs from Authentic Prophetic Traditions

Authentic Prophetic traditions, as well as traditions of the Prophet's companions, with whom Allah is pleased, and works of the Four Imama and of the rest of the pious predecessors contain many textual as well as inferential proofs of Allah's Loftiness. Allah, the Exalted, praises His Messenger (saw) and confirms his veracity and truthfulness by saying:

“Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is only revelation revealed (to him.)”²⁸

And Allah says:

“And whatsoever the Messenger commands you, adhere to it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it.”

And the Messenger of Allah (saw) said:

“I have been given the Qur'an and similar to it therewith.”²⁹

²⁶Istawa' p.t. is derived from the verb sawiya and its derivative form istiwa' to mount on the Throne. The Ash'arites, the Mu'tazilites, the Jahmites, and those who uphold their belief, hold the attribute of Istiwa' to be only symbolic, whereas Ahlus-Sunnah accept this and the other essential attributes of Allah literally without drawing parallels.

²⁷ Q 7:54

²⁸ Surah Najm:3-4

²⁹ Abu Dawood

The purified Sunnah is what the Prophet (saw) meant by saying: “and similar to it therewith”. The Sunnah is the second source of the Shari'ah of Islamic laws. Many traditions deal with the attribute of Allah's Loftiness. The following are selected authentic traditions to whose authenticity all scholars of the hadith at all times have testified.

- The Prophet (saw) reported his eventful journey from Makkah to Jerusalem (al-Mi'raj)³⁰ and from there up to the heavens as follows:

Jibreel took me up to the lowest heaven and requested its guards to open its gate. He was asked, 'Who is this?' He answered, 'Jibreel.' 'Who is with you?' They inquired. 'Muhammed (saw)' He answered. They inquired. 'Has he been invited?' 'Yes'. Jibreel replied. Then someone greeted saying, 'He is most welcome'. The Prophet (saw) continued, when the gate was opened, I entered and met Adam there. Jibreel said to me, 'This is your father, greet him'. Adam greeted me back, saying: 'Welcome, pious son and pious Prophet'. Then Jibreel ascended to the second heaven and requested its guards to open its gate.

The questioning that took place in the lowest heaven was repeated before the gate was opened. The Prophet (saw) described what he saw in every heaven, until finally he was taken up to the seventh heaven where obligatory prayers were prescribed to him.

This authentic mutawatir ³¹ hadith speaks clearly in plain words and straightforward manner which is not liable to misconstruction or farfetched interpretations. The Prophet (saw) was taken up to his Rubb from one heaven above the other. The Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah believe that the Mi'raj was neither an illusion nor a vision, rather real and essential. Had Allah been everywhere, why would the Prophet (saw) be taken all the way up to the seventh heaven? Allah would have prescribed to him the Salaah on earth rather than in the seventh heaven.

- Abdullah bin Amr reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

“Be merciful to those on earth, so that the One above the heavens will be merciful to you.”³²

Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

“The angels of death usually attend the dying person. If he is pious, they would address his soul saying, 'O good soul! Come out of the good body, and rejoice in the annunciation of mercy and provision from the Rubb Who is well pleased with you'. The angels would keep coaxing it with these words until the soul emerges from the body. Then it would be taken up to the heaven where permission to open the gates of the heaven would be sought. The guards would inquire, 'Who is this?' 'So and so', the angels would answer. The guards would say: 'O good soul! You are welcome'. The soul would be flattered by such words and finally be taken up to heaven above which is Allah.”³³

³⁰ Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim and others.

³¹ This is the strongest category of the authentic ahadith.

³² Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, and others.

³³ Imam Ahmad, al-Hakim, and others.

It is quite evident that Allah, the Exalted, is above the seven heavens. Otherwise, why would the souls and the believers deeds be taken up to the heavens to reach Allah?

•Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

“The angel of death used to appear to people whose souls he would collect. When he came to the Prophet of Allah, Musa (as) to collect his soul, Musa punched out his eye. The angel of death ascended to his Rubb, the Glorious, and said to Him, My Rubb! You have sent me down to Musa who punched out my eye. Had he not been honoured by You, I would have given him hard time...”

The angel of death descended to Musa from the heaven to collect his soul. He did not come to him from east, west, north, or south, nor did he emerge from the earth, and then he ascended to His Rubb Who is above the heavens.

•Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

“There are hundred levels in Jannah which Allah has prepared for the Mujahideen who fight in His cause. Between one level and another is a distance which is equal to that between the earth and the heaven. When you ask Allah, azza wajull, ask Him for Firdaws, because it is situated in the midst and Highest point of Jannah from where the rivers of Jannah spring, and above it is the 'Arsh of the Most Merciful.”³⁴

•Mu'awiyah as-Sahmi reported:

“I had some sheep which I kept between Uhud and Juwaniyyah with a slave-girl to look after them. One day, I went out to check on my sheep and discovered that a wolf had devoured one of them. Since I am just a human, (I became angry) and struck the girl. Later on, I came to the Prophet (saw) and reported to him the incident. He terrified me with the gravity of my action. I said, 'Messenger of Allah! Shall I free her (as an expiation of my sin). He said 'Call her over'. When I did, he asked her, 'Where is Allah?' She said, 'Above the heavens'. Then he asked her, 'Who am I?' She said, 'The Messenger of Allah (saw)'. Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered me, 'Free her. She is a believer'.”³⁵

The above hadith, according to Shaikh Kahlil al-Harras, is a luminous proof of the Loftiness of Allah, the Exalted. Here is a man who wronged his female slave by striking her, and wanted to expiate his sin by giving her freedom in return. The Prophet (saw) chose one particular question, 'Where is Allah?' Then the slave girl gave him the correct answer, 'Above the heaven'. The Prophet (SAW) declared her to be a believer.

Does not the above the hadith stand as a solid proof that Allah is above the heaven? Doubtlessly, that slave girl, the shepherdess, knew her Rubb more than those ignorantly claim that Allah is everywhere!

•Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

“Our Rubb, the Blessed, the Exalted, descends to the lowest heaven every night, during the last third of the night, and says: ‘Anyone calls Me, I will respond to him? Is there anyone

³⁴ Imam al-Bukhari, Ahmad, and others

³⁵ Imam Muslim, Abu Dawood, and others.

asking for anything? I will give it to him? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, I will forgive him?"³⁶

The words of the Prophet (saw): 'Our Rubb, the Blessed, the Exalted, descends to the lowest heaven', clearly indicate the essential Highness or Loftiness of Allah, the Exalted. Were Allah to exist everywhere, there would be no need for the Prophet (saw) who knew Allah best, to say, 'Allah descends', nor would there be a reason to distinguish one portion of the night from another. There is only one answer to this: Allah, the Blessed, the Exalted, is above the seven heavens, and above the great 'Arsh.

- Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (saw) said:

"Allah will descend to His slaves on the Day of Resurrection."³⁷

It is the Day when Allah will come down to pass His judgment.

- In another tradition, the Prophet (saw) said:

"Allah will gather the first and the last of His slaves for an appointed certain Day, when they will remain for forty years with their eyes uplifted towards heaven waiting for the decisive judgment. Allah will then descend in coverings of clouds from His 'Arsh to the Kursi."

The Standpoint of the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them)

- Zainab, the wife of the Prophet (saw), used to claim excellence over the rest of his wives by telling them, 'It is only your parents who gave you in marriage to the Prophet (saw), while it is Allah Who gave me in marriage to him from above the seven heavens.'³⁸

- In another narration, she said to the Prophet (saw), 'It is the Rahmaan, the Merciful, Who married me to you from above His 'Arsh.'

- Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said to Aa'ishah, the wife of the Messenger of Allah (saw) when she was on her death bed:

"Of all his wives you were the most beloved to the Messenger of Allah (saw), and he used to live only the pure. Allah, the Exalted sent down your exoneration from above the seven heavens which was brought down by Jibreel. There is not a single masjid of the masajid of Allah but the verses of your exoneration³⁹ are recited in it day and night."

Aa'ishah, the wife of the Prophet (saw) in this world and in the world to come, Mother of the Believers, whom the pervasive-minded sect tried to dishonour, but Allah, the Exalted, exonerated her honour and condemned those who spread the lies against her.

- In his speech subsequent to the death of the Prophet (saw), Abu Bakr as-Saddiq said:

³⁶ Imam Malik, Imam al-Bukhari, Imam Muslim, and others.

³⁷ At-Tirmidhi and others

³⁸ Al-Bukhari.

³⁹ The verses in question are in surat An-noor #24:11 thru 20

"He who was worshipping Muhammed (saw), (let him know that) Muhammed is dead, and he who was worshipping Allah, (let him know that) Allah is above the heaven Ever-Living, never dies'." ⁴⁰

• Ibn Umar passed by a shepherd and asked him:

'Do you have a sheep fit for slaughter? 'It's owner is around', the shepherd answered. 'Tell him that the wolf devoured it'. Ibn Umar said to him. Thereupon, the shepherd uplifted his head towards the heaven and said, 'Then where is Allah?' Ibn Umar responded, 'By Allah. It is I who should have said, 'Where is Allah.' He later on bought off the sheep and the shepherd and freed the latter and gave him the sheep. ⁴¹

• Abdurrahman al-Mahdi ⁴² said:

"There is no one more evil among the people of whims than the followers of Jahm. All their deviant beliefs revolve around one theme; 'There is no one above the heaven.' I believe, by Allah, that they should not be married from, nor to inherit Muslims nor to be inherited by Muslims."

This opinion of Ibn Mahdi is shared by many among the pious predecessors.

• Wahab b. Jareer said:

"Beware of the opinions of Jahm's followers, for they try to convince people that there is nothing above the heavens. Their statements are only from Iblees's revelation, and it is only infidelity." ⁴³

The Standpoint of the Four Renowned Imams

Imam Abu Hanifah ⁴⁴

Abu Muti' Al-Balkhi reported:

"I asked Imam Abu Hanifah about a person who says, 'I do not know whether my Rubb is, above the heavens or on earth?' Abu Hanifah, may Allah grant him His mercy, said: 'A person who makes such a statement becomes an apostate because Allah, the Exalted says, 'The Merciful has ascended above the 'Arsh, and the 'Arsh of Allah is above His heavens'. I further asked Abu Hanifah, 'What if such a person admits, Allah is above His 'Arsh, but exclaims, I do not know whether His 'Arsh is above the heavens or on earth'. Abu Hanifah responded: 'If he denies that the 'Arsh is above the heavens, he is an apostate.' ⁴⁵

If the person apostatizes by saying that he did not know where is the 'Arsh of Allah, then by right a person who denies the Loftiness of Allah altogether is definitely worse than an apostate.

⁴⁰ Imam al-Bukhari and others.

⁴¹ Adth-Thahabi

⁴² He was a great scholar and a leading authority in the Prophetic traditions, and a contemporary of Imam ash-Shafi'ee, (135-198H.)

⁴³ Al-Bukhari, adth-Thahabi and others.

⁴⁴ Abu Hanifah, one of the four Imam was prominent jurist living from 80 to 150 AH.

⁴⁵ Sharhut-Tahawiyah, p.288

Imam Malik⁴⁶

Abdullah bin Nafi' reported:

Malik bin Anas said: 'Allah is above the heavens, but His knowledge encompasses everything. Nothing escapes His knowledge.'⁴⁷

Imam Ash-Shafi'ee⁴⁸

Imam ash-Shafi'ee said:

"The creed which I hold is the same creed the Muslims before me were holding, namely, the Testimony of Faith: "There is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah, that Muhammed is the Messenger of Allah, and that Allah is above His 'Arsh, above the heavens. He descends to the lowest heaven whenever He wishes."⁴⁹

Imam ibn Khuzaimah, a Shafi'ite himself, said: "Whoever disacknowledges that Allah is above His 'Arsh, above His seven heavens, and that He is separated from His creatures, is a Kafir, (unbeliever). Such person must be ordered to repent and disavow his belief, or else he must be beheaded and thrown on a garbage dump so that neither Ahlul-Qiblah⁵⁰ nor Ahludth-dthimmah⁵¹ be annoyed by the foul odour of his carcass."⁵²

Abu Bakr Muhammad at-Tamimi, a Shafi'ite imam of Naisaboor, said:

"I do not pray behind a person who denies the attributes of Allah and does not recognize that Allah is above His 'Arsh."⁵³

Imam Ahmad⁵⁴

He was asked: "Is Allah above His 'Arsh, above the seventh heaven, separate from His creatures, and is His knowledge and power encompassing everything everywhere? He replied: 'Certainly, He is above His 'Arsh and nothing escapes His knowledge.'⁵⁵[54]

All of the above show that the entire Muslim ummah, in the past and present, is in unison regarding the belief in the Loftiness and Supremacy of Allah, the Exalted.

⁴⁶ Malik bin Anas, one of the four Imams, was prominent jurist and traditionist (93-179 H).

⁴⁷ Abdullah bin Ahmad, as-Sunnah, and others

⁴⁸ Abdullah Muhammad bin Idris ash-Shafi'ee one of the prominent four Imams. Prominent jurist (150-204 H)

⁴⁹ Al-Juyoosh al-Islamiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, p.93

⁵⁰ The Muslims in general.

⁵¹ Christian or Jewish subjects of a Muslim country.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal, the great Imam, was nicknamed the Imam of Ahlus-Sunnah. This name was to become in Islam the watchword for uncompromising belief. Imam Ahmad, may Allah be pleased with him, was a hero and victim of the violent inquisition during the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'moon, who ordered his subjects, under pain of severe punishment, to adopt the belief that the words of Allah of which the Qur'an is composed are created, thus resembling the belief of the Christians. Imam Ahmad, who refused to endorse this belief was subjected to harassment, imprisonment, and torture.

⁵⁵ Al-Juyoosh al-Islamiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, p.123.

Dubious Arguments

Adherents of certain deviant sects promote a false belief that Allah is omnipresent Who inheres in His creation. Rational arguments are readily available to refute the blasphemy of the Jahmites and those who try to revive their belief today. To prove that Allah is above His 'Arsh, and above the seventh heaven in a manner that suits His Majesty, the Imam of Ahlus-Sunnah, Ahmad bin Hanbal, may Allah be pleased with him, refuted their belief more than one thousand years ago, when he wrote: "Where Allah is and Where He is not - An exposition of the denial of the Jahmites that Allah is above the 'Arsh."

We asked them "Why do you deny that Allah is above the 'Arsh when He has said: **'The Merciful has mounted the 'Arsh?'**⁵⁶ And again, **'Who in six days created the Heavens and the earth then mounted the 'Arsh,'**⁵⁷ They replied: "He is under the seven earths as He is on the 'Arsh; He is in heaven, on earth and in every place; there is no place where He is not, nor is He is one place to the exclusion of any other." And they quoted the verse: "And He is Ilaah in the heavens and He is Ilaah on the Earth!"

If you wish to prove the falsehood of the Jahmites who claim that Allah exists everywhere, not in one particular place, ask them, 'Is it not true that Allah was existent when there was nothing in existence?' The Jahmites' answer would be: "Certainly, there was nothing before Allah." Then ask them, "Did Allah create the creation within Himself or outside of Himself?" The Jahmites would be compelled to choose on of the following three answers:

- If the Jahmites assert that Allah created the creation within Himself, they would then become apostate instantly by claiming that the Jinn, humans and Satans are all dwelling within Allah.
- If the Jahmites assert that Allah created the creation outside Himself but dwelled in them afterwards, they would also become apostate instantly by claiming that Allah dwells in His creatures.
- But if the Jahmites say that Allah created the creation outside Himself and has never dwelled in them, they would by giving this answer, join the folds of Ahl-As-Sunnah, for by giving this answer they denounce their own deviant beliefs.

Allah, the Exalted, described Himself in the Torah too that He is above His creatures. Ka'bul-Ahbaar said: "Allah, azza wajall,"⁵⁸ said in the Torah,

'I, Allah Am above My slaves, and My 'Arsh is above My creatures, and I am upon My 'Arsh running the affairs of My slaves. Nothing is hidden from Me neither in heaven nor on the earth."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Surah Taa Haa:5

⁵⁷ Q 25:60

⁵⁸ Azza wajall, Allah is the Powerful, the Glorious

⁵⁹ Adth-Thahabi and others

Finally, it may be worthwhile to say that even the enemy of Allah, Fir'awn (Pharoah), who flagrantly claimed to be a god of his people, knew where Allah is more than the followers of Jahm today. Allah says:

“And Fir'awn said, 'O, Haman, build for me a tower that I may reach the ways; the ways to heavens so that I may have a look at the Ilaah of Musa.”⁶⁰

Now consider the words of Fir'awn who wanted Haman to build a tower for him that he might climb all the way to the heavens to see the Rubb of Musa, for Musa already told him that Allah to Whom he is inviting him is above the heavens, and compare this with the groundless argument of the Jahmite off-shoots of today.

A Muslim wonders how could those who believe that Allah is Omnipresent rationalize such assertion knowing that Allah, the Omnipotent, will collect the earth in His hand and fold the heavens in His right hand, as evidenced by the following divine stern warning.

“And they have not venerated Allah with the veneration that is due Him, for on the Day of Resurrection, the earth will be collected in His hand and the heavens will be folded up in His right hand.”⁶¹

Were the above verse to be the only proof of Allah's Loftiness, it would have been more than sufficient. It is certainly sufficient to those who fear Allah and give Him the true veneration that is due to Him.

Conclusion

The first three Muslim generations whose righteousness the Messenger of Allah (saw) testified for, and whose merits surpassed the merits of all succeeding generation. They are the Companions of the Prophet (saw) and the two generations that followed them. They all believed in the apparent meaning of the Qur'anic ayaat that deal with the divine attributes without giving them farfetched interpretations based on Greek philosophies.

The Believer must believe that there is none like unto Allah, the Exalted, in His essence, attributes, nor His actions. He must also believe that Allah stands in need of none of His creatures. Neither a thing nor a place encompasses Him. He is above His 'Arsh, above the seventh heaven, and above all His creature essentially and realistically not allegorically. There is none of His creatures that touches Him.

Based on this it is not permissible to say that Allah is everywhere, or He inheres in any of His creatures, for Allah was when there was nothing. He who asserts that Allah is not outside the universe, not only denies the existence of Allah, but he worships a non-existent god.

We ask Allah to keep us on the straight path of His Messenger (saw) and his Companions and to make us join their company on the Day when neither wealth nor offspring would avail. Walhamdu lillahi Rabbil-aalameen.

⁶⁰ Q 40:36,37

⁶¹ Q 39:67